

A MODERN CYRANO IN NEW YORK WITH A REAL CYRANO NOSE.

Mr. Richard Smith, Whose Portrait You See Here, Goes to See the Stage Cyrano, to Suffer and Sympathize with Him---He Describes for the Journal How It Feels to Have a Nose That Was Always Big, and Is Growing Bigger All the Time.

TO W. R. HEARST, EDITOR OF THE JOURNAL:

NO man ever attended a performance of "Cyrano de Bergerac" and felt the keen suffering of the man more than myself. Every pang that he had to endure I have experienced, and from my earliest recollection I have had no peace owing to the immensity of my nose.

My mother, a few days prior to my birth, was struck on the nose, and the result of the blow has been with me for twenty-two years, the entire length of my life-time. As a meret child I remember the way I was stared at. No matter where I went, or who approached me, I felt that inquisitive eyes were turned upon my affliction. I was obliged to avert my face to avoid the questioning eyes that were always pointed at me.

There was no way to escape, and as I grew older the development enlarged and my misery increased in proportion. In the mountains where I lived and knew everybody I managed to get used to it. But whenever a stranger came to town and I happened along I knew that I was being looked at. For years I carefully avoided people whom I did not know intimately.

I could not follow the course of Cyrano, who challenged the inquisitive to fight to the death. Had I attempted to do so I would have spent all my life combating those who gazed at me in wide-eyed wonderment. The affliction was apparently to remain with me forever, or at least as long as I lived.

Everything possible was done for me, but the nose did not improve, and as I grew older and realized that I would have to go to work soon I looked around for some occupation wherein I could make a living and at the same time get away from the searching glances that fell upon me as I passed along the street. I found that there was nothing left for me but to become a wood chopper in the mountains. This enabled me to get away and ply my axe alone. When a stranger passed I turned my back upon him and waited until he had gone down the road out of my sight.

I suffered all sorts of inconveniences in order that I might not offend a woman's eyes. At times I was questioned by people and invariably found it hard to get away without telling something of my misfortune and how the great nose had clung to me since the day I was born.

Can a Man with a Big Nose Be Really Loved.

CYRANO DE BERGERAC, the great play of the present hour, revolves around a nose that is monumental and tragic. It makes of the hero a martyr of love. It makes of audiences in Paris, London, Berlin, New York and Philadelphia, eager disputants about a question that affects the most sensitive chords in human nature. May a man of good qualities be troubled from a physical deformity so intensely that the love of woman is refused to him?

Coguetin, Beerholm Tree, Richard Mansfield are playing the part of Cyrano de Bergerac with all the art of which they are



I could not muster up the courage that Cyrano de Bergerac displayed and move among the people with the certain knowledge that I was not under constant inspection. It is all right in stage-land to fight every one who gives you his attention, but in real life it is out of the question. I can understand how any one would be likely to stare at me. I know my appearance is unusual, and that wherever I go I am bound to be talked about.

I never allowed myself to engage in a love affair. I never had the heart, nor could I hope for success. All my life I hoped for the day that medical science would bring about the removal of at least a portion of my nose. But up to my arrival in New York, where I expect to undergo a successful operation, I gave it up as a bad job.

Doctors heretofore have refused to make the attempt, and I had about come to the conclusion that I was to go down to my grave as did the unfortunate Cyrano de Bergerac, without relief.

It has been my belief that a cure could be effected, as I am sure the cartilage and bone of the nose are still in good condition, and that if the great growth could be skillfully removed I would get along all right.

That is the reason I have come to Bellevue Hospital, and I am willing to undergo any operation and any sort of pain to give the physicians a fair chance.

If they should fail there is nothing left for me to do but return to the mountains and stick it out until the end.

Surgeons who have examined me say that it is possible to operate successfully provided the work is properly done. I have been told that Professor Bryant, ex-President Cleveland's former physician, was competent to give me relief, and I have journeyed here to give him a chance.

The daily papers have not exaggerated my deformity a particle, and the sketch made by the Sunday Journal artist is correct in every particular, as I sat for him and he made a careful portrait of me.

It will be a great relief to me if I can go home with a normal nose, and the joy of moving around among men without being stared at will pay for the pain I expect to undergo in the operation.

RICHARD SMITH.

The Big Nose in Fiction and in Real Life.

All the men whom he appointed to elevated stations had big noses, and those whom he regarded with suspicion were in his mental notes marked as men with weak noses. He was a physiognomist, and Lavater's science, as well as the facts of history, sustained his judgment as a reader of character.

Men with big noses are heroic, faithful, loyal, benevolent. They have Cyrano de Bergerac's virtues. Why do women disdain them, if they do? Was Cyrano de Bergerac's experience unique? Coquelin played with his natural nose, that is turned up, and a red wig, the part of Gringoire in Banville's Idyl of a vagabond poet gaining by force of verses, at the king's pleasure, a lady's

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capable. Hucksters are selling in the aisles of playhouses wax noses that are kneaded in grotesque grimaces. In all languages critics are praising the work of the playwright, Edmond Rostand, and philosophers are discussing his theme, which is historic and treated with fidelity to details of the hero's life. May a man have an ugly nose and be loved?

Richard Smith, a lumberman of the Adirondacks, who had never heard of Cyrano de Bergerac, the man, or of "Cyrano de Bergerac," the play, has just arrived in New York to be cured at Bellevue of the physical infirmity which Richard Mansfield makes comic, pathetic, interesting, every evening on the stage of the Garden Theatre.

Richard Smith's mind is not complex. He is not learned. He is not a Gascon. He does not live in an age when a man may challenge to a duel every insolent person who makes fun of him. Richard Smith's nose darkens his life as much as his face. In the woods where he cuts down trees, he turns his back to every stranger.

He is timid and his mortification is profound. He has been laughed at always. He is worse than hideous, he is ridiculous. In New York, where science may find a cure for his physical infirmity, Edmond Rostand's play offers to him unexpectedly a cure for his moral infirmity. The Cyrano de Bergerac of the Adirondacks faces the Cyrano de Bergerac of the heroic stage. Richard Smith is not consoled. He expresses sympathy with the poet, regret that he may not emulate the poet's pride. That is all. He is more eager than ever to be delivered of the tyranny of ugliness that his nose inflicts upon him.

Of his desperation a romanticist would have made a book in the time when Hugo idealized Triboulet, the King's jester, in "Le Roi S'Amuse," and Quinsimodo, the bell ringer in "Notre Dame de Paris." But this end of the nineteenth century is better educated than was the beginning of it. It does not seem possible that Richard Smith, if he were a man of science, a poet, or a hero, would have to suffer because he was born with a nose that is ugly.

"Ugly nose never spoiled comely visage," is a French proverb old and old enough to be true. But is it true? Witness: Cyrano de Bergerac. He was a poet and a man of honor. He had wit and a heart. Brave, generous, loyal to his friends, just to his enemies, he had all the good qualities.

In an epoch when writers were servile or vile, when Moliere had to flatter the King in order to tell what he thought of the rest, Cyrano de Bergerac wrote the first journal that the wicked and the feeble called yellow. "Un chroniqueur jaune," a fellow journalist, he was called by the Comte de Guiche, in the days when Richelieu's private secretary was dubbed His Gray Eminence.

Cyrano de Bergerac was a hero. Alone, he fought and routed a hundred men posted in ambush to assassinate one of his friends. From his play the "Pedant Joue" Moliere took the dialogue of an entire scene and inserted it in "L'Avare." From Cyrano de Bergerac's "Voyage to the Moon" Edgar Allan Poe took the adventure of Hans Pfall.

That musketeer of Louis XIII had the erudition of a man of science. He was Gassendi's best pupil. And how seductively he could talk to women! The phrases of his compliments were a ripple of pure pearls. Roxane, his cousin, knew all these good qualities of Cyrano de Bergerac and never divided even that he was in love with her. She saw him in bravery, she heard him in poetic inspiration, but the ugliness of his nose spoiled the beauty of his visage in her view. She preferred a handsome fellow who was idiotic.

Cyrano de Bergerac's nose must have been monstrous. It was. Theophile Gautier saw it in an old print that served as a frontis-



Richard Smith, the Modern Cyrano, Watches Mansfield's Portrayal of the Miseries of His Historical Prototype.

piece to the first edition of the poet's collected works, published in Paris in 1629 in duodecimo volumes which may be found in sumptuous bindings of Boyet and Padeloup, in libraries of book lovers like the Baron Alphonse de Rothschild, and not elsewhere. Here is Gautier's description:

"That improbable nose has in the middle of it a mountain which seems to me to be the Himalaya, or the highest mountain in the world. That improbable nose falls on the mouth like a sapir's trunk or the beak of a bird of prey. At the point it is separated into two parts by a line like the one that furrowed the cherrylike lips of Ann of Austria, the white queen with long ivory hands."

"That makes two distinct noses on one face, which is more than custom permits, sang a song, the refrain of which was, 'Take your nose out of the way, in order that I may be able to see the Archbishop's palace.'"

Montaigne, in his essay on personal beauty, praised big noses as indications of strength and character, and Napoleon had an absolute confidence in them. Napoleon selected marshals, governors of provinces, kings, with particular regard for the size of their noses. He would say to his secretary, the Baron de Meneval, "I am sure that Bernadotte, with his Gascon nose, can rule Sweden," or "I would not be so confident of Murat's success if it were not for the strength of the bridge of his nose," or "Mme. de Stael will make of Benjamin Constant whatever she wishes. He has a weak nose."

"Bumped, a nose, however big, recalls in the classical a figure on a Greek medal. It inspires respect, not laughter. To create in an audience the impression that Cyrano de Bergerac's nose made the player's makeup has to be an artistic transformation of the original."

And it is true that big noses have been regarded with respect always in all countries except China. Pintarch says that the nose of Numa Pompilius was half a foot long. Lysurgus and Solon had enormous nasal organs. Ovid's nose was always followed by the epithet "naso."

Titus had a nose which was a promontory, and to Camoens the street Arabs sang a song, the refrain of which was, "Take your nose out of the way, in order that I may be able to see the Archbishop's palace."

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love. Savonarola, whose sermons against luxury in the streets filled with pedantic masquerades of old Italy, excited insurrections of the religious and the grave, had a hooked nose of immense proportions. He was terrific, and there was a charm in his pale, sad face. But women kissed the hem of his garments and followed him in rapture.

Dante, to whom the people, as he passed among them, pointed with awe, saying, "Here is the man who went to Heaven and to Hades and returned," had a pale face framed in a dark hood. His nose was so prominent that the satirical poets wrote epigrams about it incessantly. But he had the love of a real Beatrice, not less admirable than the ideal one whose aristocratic silhouette seems to have been cut by Dante in a panel of azure.

Dante and Savonarola were infinitely great, but there were other heroes of the people who were not comely and whom women admired. Would they applaud Wainwright and Hobson, if their faces were not attractive? If the heroes of the Mercurine and the Gloucester had noses of Cyrano de Bergerac and Richard Smith would they be idols still? And what of Jean de Reszke, John Drew, Sothern, Chancey Olcott, Robert Hilliard, whom the matinee girls applaud so enthusiastically?

"Could you love a man who had Cyrano's nose?" Mrs. Edna Wallace Hopper was asked yesterday.

"I don't know," she replied laughingly. "Mr. Hopper's nose was not beautiful."

"And you loved him. That is wit," said her questioner. "But it would have to be explained to the Laplanders. They do not know that you have ceased to love him. Could you love a Cyrano?"

"I think," Mrs. Edna Wallace Hopper replied in all seriousness, "that a man with an enormous nose may be loved for his attractive ugliness even in New York. But it is like putting salt on the flying sparrow's tail. He must have known how to make himself loved before one had time to think not to love him."

"There are examples of men with ugly noses loved madly. Shall I mention names? No? Well, I think they must have had a great deal of power to subject New York women. They have an imperious admiration for beauty."

"But beauty of mind," the questioner began.

"Is all very well," Mrs. Edna Wallace Hopper continued. "I think it ought to appear in the features. Of course, if I had time to become acquainted with a man whose features were not attractive to me at first, and I discovered that he was admirable in heart and mind, and my heart were--- Oh, to stop so many ifs. Certainly I might love a man who had Cyrano's nose and his brains."

Miss Madge Lessing exclaimed, "Surely I could love Cyrano de Bergerac! Physical beauty is nothing. It is the soul that is lovable. I have been guarded always against admiration for mere physical charm alone."

"Then you don't think that physical charm is a reflection of mental attributes?" she was asked.

"Oh, no. Between a hero and the man who plays the hero the advantage is always to the player. I saw once in a railway station in Europe a man who said he had killed tigers in India. He looked it. But he had never been in India. He was a green grocer's clerk."

"In the same carriage, seated opposite him, was a real tiger killer. He had made a great reputation in India. I have forgotten his name. He looked like an old man with a cold in his head."